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Linguistic Areas in East-Central Europe as the Result of Pluridimensional, Polycentric Convergence Phenomena

Abstract: The following contribution deals with problems that make analysing linguistic areas in East-Central Europe, as the result of pluridimensional, polycentric convergence phenomena, a real challenge. It demonstrates why we still must investigate further into the contribution of specific groups of people to the emergence of certain areas in order to gain a better understanding of linguistic areas, especially in East-Central Europe. Furthermore, it also shows that in this context it seems more appropriate to speak of polycentric rather than pluricentric convergence. Whereas a pluricentric language is the sum of its varieties, a polycentric language according to Li/Juffermans (2012, p. 77) is "a dynamic, socially ordered system of resources and norms that are strongly or weakly associated with one or more centers". As we could see from the example of their different evolution and history, signed languages are not so tied to the spoken languages of a region, but rather to a place or a social stratum. This fact makes the concept of linguistic areas appear even more vivid and dependent on social interaction rather than on the specific characteristics of the languages in contact: Languages do not converge by themselves, it is the behaviour of the speakers that brings about these pluridimensional, polycentric convergence phenomena leading to specific linguistic areas.

Keywords: linguistic areas, East-Central Europe, linguistic convergence, polycentricity, historical sociolinguistics

1 Introduction

For more than a century, linguists from different cultural backgrounds have been using the term "linguistic area" to denote languages that have developed common features resulting from geographical proximity and language contact. Rik van Gijn and Pieter Muysken (2016, s. p.) define these areas "as social spaces (regions, countries, (sub-)continents) in which languages from different families have influenced each other significantly, leading to striking or remarkable structural resemblances across genealogical boundaries." Despite that, as Sarah Grey Thomason (2000, p. 311) aptly remarks, there is still little consensus on the general nature of the phenomenon, although there are numerous valuable studies of particular linguistic areas and of particular features within certain linguistic areas. This is certainly caused by the complexity of the situation, or as Thomason

(2000, p. 311) puts it, "The most important (though not very neat) conclusion, however, is that attempts to find very general social and/or linguistic principles of convergence in a linguistic area are doomed – not only because every Sprachbund differs from every other one, but also because the conditions of contact in large Sprachbünde will inevitably vary over time and space." In other words, areas of linguistic convergence are diffusion areas or varying language crossroads and thus not a uniform linguistic, social or historical phenomenon.

Moreover, since the approaches to the study of the distribution of linguistic features have been mostly structural and historical, the notion of "linguistic areas" has been much criticised in the strict sense. In tandem with a better understanding of the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic mechanisms and scenarios leading to linguistic areas, the areal perspective keeps gaining ground, again, in explaining how languages actually converge and which mechanisms promote or block this type of convergence: "Languages do not converge by themselves; rather, it is the agency or unconscious behavior of speakers that has this effect." (Gijn/Muysken 2016, para. 1)

2 Linguistic Areas in East-Central Europe

Now, if we have a look at East-Central Europe, we are confronted with various contact areas of Germanic languages with Baltic, Finno-Ugrian and Slavic languages. Roughly since the 6th and 7th centuries, Slavs had settled the lands in Central and Eastern Europe including much of present-day Germany and Austria, abandoned by Germanic tribes fleeing the Huns and their allies. We can find traits of this settlement in many place names east of the line of the Elbe and Saale rivers today. In the following centuries, so-called marches were established east of this line to protect the frontier, from which an eastwards colonisation into Slavic territory commenced. Moreover, the subsequent expansion of the Magyars as well as the Bavarianisation of the region of present-day Austria separated the northern and southern Slavs. However, their influence on the languages of the people in – at least eastern – Austria has remained intact ever since and has become even more manifest in the wake of the major waves of Slavic migration to Vienna in the 19th and 20th centuries (Newerkla 2000, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013a, 2013b).

At the same time, the large north-south extension of German and its spread over several countries and, subsequently, states has led to the rather uncontroversial conclusion that German is a pluricentric language. Not only does pluricentric German display characteristic features of Standard Average European, but it also comprises several distinguishing features in various contact areas with Baltic,

Finno-Ugrian and Slavic languages. Therefore, it seems justified to speak not just of one East-Central European language area, but of several varyingly distinct and overlapping language contact areas in Eastern Central Europe. Like isoglosses, which constitute certain dialect areas in dialectology, bundled language contact phenomena distinguish certain contact areas from others. In this context, further research on the role of Yiddish for the emergence and understanding of linguistic areas in Eastern Central Europe is still a major and pressing desideratum.

2.1 Pluridimensional Convergence – The Example of Austria

A major language contact area in East-Central Europe – merely one out of several – is the contact zone with the former centre of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with German, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian as its core languages as well as Polish, Slovene and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian as its only partially involved peripheral languages. A detailed description of this area and the history of its evolution can be found in Jiří Januška's (2017) new dissertation, comparing Central European languages beyond structural features and loanwords.[1] He is also one of the contributors to this book.

In present-day Austria, we can still identify traces of this multilingual area. There are seven officially recognised minority languages, the languages of the so-called six autochthonous ethnic groups officially recognised by the Ethnic Groups Act (VoGrG): Burgenland Croatian, Slovene, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Romani, plus Austrian Sign Language (*Österreichische Gebärdensprache*, ÖGS). However, the 20th century also brought about a significant change in the importance of the several ethnically Slavic minority groups and their languages in Austria. Whereas, for example, the influence of Czech and Slovak declined, the importance of other groups – e.g. the Poles (after 1978), but especially the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians – and their languages increased successively throughout the second half of the 20th century. These immigrant workers arrived in large numbers in the wake of the war in the Balkans and in parallel with the increased Turkish population in Austria.

To date, a considerable amount of literature on Slavic-German language contact phenomena has been published (the relevant chapters in Goebl/Nelde/Starý/Woelck 1996–1997 and the bibliography in Newerkla 2011, pp. 619–710). In this context, one of the most promising efforts to reconcile the fragmented research community on German in East-Central Europe was the launch of the

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1   A recent important achievement on this topic is also the summarising book on the Central European languages by Ondřej Bláha (2015).

Research Centre for German in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe (FZ DiMOS) in 2014 as a scientific institution of the Faculty of Linguistics, Literature and Cultural Studies (SLK) of the University of Regensburg.[2] Its primary goals are analysing and documenting the German language in East-Central Europe by taking into account the historical and current multilingual situation of this area, and by cooperating closely with colleagues from the local universities and other scientific institutions. At present, German no longer takes the role of a dominant language, but functions as an interregional means of communication and as a bridge language in an area stricken by modern migration movements.

In contrast, comparably minimal systematic and exhaustive linguistic research has been conducted on the linguistic influences and contact phenomena between the Slavic languages (including their varieties) and German in Eastern Austria. Recent studies on the matter are rare (the last comprehensive study being Steinhauser 1978), or only highlight certain aspects (e.g. Ernst 2008, Masařík 1998, Newerkla 2007a, 2007b, 2009, Pohl 1999, 2007, Zeman 2009). However, several popular descriptions of these phenomena have been published since the 1980s (e.g. Grüner/Sedlaczek 2003, Schuster/Schikola 1996, Sedlaczek 2007, 2011, Wehle 1980, 1996, 1997). However, some of them partially comprise unverified information and perpetuate language myths.

In 2016, a consortium consisting of Alexandra Lenz, Gerhard Budin and Stefan Michael Newerkla from the University of Vienna, Stephan Elspaß from the University of Salzburg and Arne Ziegler from the University of Graz were granted a Special Research Program (SFB) by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) on "German in Austria. Variation – Contact – Perception" (F 60-G 23).[3] The scope and topic of this SFB encompass the entire spectrum of variation and varieties of German in Austria, bringing together expertise from the fields of variationist linguistics, contact linguistics and multilingualism research, as well as from sociolinguistically based research on language perception and attitudes. Project part "German and the Slavic languages in Austria. Aspects of language contact" in task cluster C will eventually culminate in a detailed overview of contact-induced Slavic influences on the varieties of German in Austria over time by concentrating on the exemplary situation in the urban area of Vienna. Whereas one part of our research is aimed at the historic dimension of language contact,

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2   See FZ DiMOS: http://www.uni-regensburg.de/forschung/dimos/ (accessed 13/05/2019).
3   See SFB "German in Austria. Variation – Contact – Perception": http://www.dioe.at (accessed 13/05/2019).

in which Czech was the dominant contact language, the other will address the present-day situation, in which Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian and Polish are the most important Slavic varieties in contact with the German spoken in Vienna. By doing so, we will be able to identify parallels with and contrasts to the former situation. In particular, we want to find comprehensive answers to the following research questions: What was the effect of language contact with Czech and other Slavic languages on the different language levels of the varieties of German in the city and agglomeration area of Vienna, especially during the peak of Vienna's Czech minority in the last decades of the Habsburg Empire? What is the effect of language contact with Slavic languages, especially Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Polish, on the individual language levels of the varieties of German in the urban area of Vienna today? In addition, can we identify any comparable, special or universally applicable aspects of language contact in this linguistic area? At this moment, we are still in the process of data collection and analysis, but my co-workers and project members Agnes Kim and Maria Schinko already present partial research results in their contributions to this book. That is why here and now, I just briefly recapitulate and summarise the results of our previous research in the field (especially Newerkla 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2013a, 2013b). On the one hand, we can identify a clear convergence of the vocabularies of at least Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and German standard as spoken in Old Austria, which I have already touched upon in other papers (Newerkla 2000, 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2011, pp. 76–86). There are many German loanwords in Czech, Slovak and Hungarian that derive from German words, which are still or at least were in use solely in the Austrian variety of High German. On the other hand, many Slavic, Hungarian and also Romance words found their way into the German of Old Austria and thus set to a great extent the typical character of the Austrian variety of standard High German (e.g. *Buchtel, Klobasse, Zipp, Automatenbuffet, Chauffeur, Fauteuil, Garçonnière, Lavoire, Plafond, Bartwisch, Busserl, Bussi, Dekagramm, Fasching, fesch, Hetz, Semmel, Werkel, Zeller, Biskotten, Karfiol, Malter, sekkieren, Trafik, Adjunkt, Evidenz, lizitieren, Matura, Ribisel, paprizieren, Palatschinke, Pogatsche, Kukuruz,* and so on).[4] Many of them were again passed on to other languages of the Habsburg Empire through the medium of Austrian German.

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4   The English equivalents are in succession of their appearance: *yeast pastry; hard smoked sausage; zip-fastener; automat; chauffeur; armchair; bed-sitter; wash-basin; ceiling; hand-brush; little kiss; 10 grammes = 154,324 grains* (troy and avoirdupois)*; Shrovetide; smart; fun; (Vienna) roll; barrel-organ; celeriac; biscuits; cauliflower; mortar; pester; tobacco-shop; assistant director* (one of the innumerable titles of civil servants in the

This is in accordance with an observation by Roman Jakobson (1938, p. 52) from the first half of the 20th century. He pointed out the fact that the limits of language convergence seem to coincide strikingly with boundaries of physical and political geography. By stating so, he anticipated later findings of the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1974), who claimed that different languages could form a speech community under certain political influence and social conditions.

George Thomas from McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario investigated the role of German loanwords in the Slavic languages of the Habsburg Empire on a larger scale taking into account Czech, Slovak, Slovene and Croatian. The results of his statistical evaluation among other things clearly show the important integrating function of the Austrian variety of German at that time by providing a list of German loanwords common in all the languages analysed, whereas the individual Slavic equivalents correspond only in 16 % of the instances ascertained. (Thomas 1997, pp. 341–349). We can therefore find many of the most common German loanwords in Czech also in the other languages of Old Austria, especially in their colloquial variants. In this regard, Emil Skála (1998, p. 217) mentions words such as *Gesindel – ksindl – ksindl – kszindli* 'scoundrels, riff-raff' or *Schwindel – švindl – švindl – svindli* 'swindle, cheat'.[5] Certainly, Skála's remark has its validity, but I think he does not really get to the core of the whole thing by unluckily omitting one very important fact, i.e. that the borrowing processes proceeded in several directions and thereby led to many agreements among the distribution of semantic content. As a result, these languages have become semantically similar while remaining phonetically diverse to some extent.

Such processes of language convergence become even more evident, if we do not confine ourselves just to German loanwords, but look at shared linguistic phenomena as such, for example, the use of prepositions in Austrian German, Czech and Slovak as well as the use of the corresponding suffixes in Hungarian. In English and in German as spoken in Germany we take an examination in a subject such as Russian, mathematics and so on (= *eine Prüfung in Russisch, Mathematik, … ablegen*). However, the equivalents in Austrian German, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian are in this succession *eine Prüfung aus Russisch, … ablegen*; *vykonat zkoušku z ruštiny, …*; *vykonať skúšku z ruštiny, …*; *oroszból, … vizsgáz(ni)*. The meaning of the prepositions *aus, z/ze* and *z/zo* as well as the

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Habsburg Empire)*; register; sell by auction; school-leaving exam; currant; to spice with paprika; pancake; pancake with greaves; Indian corn.*

5   We cite the examples in the following order of languages: German, Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian.

Hungarian suffixes *-ból/-ből* is the same (literally 'out of, from, of'). Similarly, in English and German as spoken in Germany we sit at the table (= *am Tisch sitzen*); the equivalents in Austrian German, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian are *bei Tisch sitzen; sedět u stolu; sedieť pri stole; asztalnál ül(ni)*. The meaning of the prepositions *bei, u* and *pri* as well as the Hungarian suffixes *-nál/-nél* is the same, again (literally 'near, close to'). A striking feature of Austrian German – especially of its colloquial varieties – in contrast to German as spoken in Germany is also the extensive and unmarked use of the preposition *auf* (= literally 'on, upon'): *auf der Universität, auf der Post, auf dem Hof, auf dem Konzert, auf dem Markt*. In many cases, this characteristic can once more be associated with the use of the preposition *na* in Czech *na univerzitě, na poště, na dvoře, na koncertě, na tržišti*, …, and Slovak *na univerzite, na pošte, na dvore, na koncerte, na trhovisku*, …, as well as the use of the Hungarian suffix *-n (-on, -en, -ön)* with the same meaning a*z egyetemen, a postán, az udvaron, a koncerten, a piacon, *…. (cf. Newerkla 2011, p. 80).

However, lingua-cultural convergence also affected the conceptual world of the urban spaces in the Habsburg Monarchy and subsequently the population throughout the Empire. Among other things, this led to certain brand and product names (known to many people even today, Newerkla 2012c). The company name Pischinger is just one example. Founded by Oscar Pischinger in 1849, it created the famous and still popular *Original Pischinger Torte*, a cake made of special cake-sized round wafers. During its heyday, the Vienna-based company had over 500 employees and outlets in Bratislava, Cracow, Chernivtsi, Budapest and Osijek (cf. Czech *pišingr*, Slovak, Slovene, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian *pišinger*, Polish *piszinger* and Hungarian *pisinger*). Another example is the brand name Ceres, with later an Austrian and a Czech version of this coconut fat (still being sold). Further products are e.g. the Austrian grape variety *Zierfandler*, Moravian Czech *cinifádl, cinifál*, Slovak *cirifandel, cirifandl, cilifandl*, Hungarian *cirfandli* (earlier *cirifandli, tzirifándli, cilifánt*) not to be mixed up with the *Zinfandel* also known as *Primitivo* (Gold 2009). The *Kaisersemmel* 'Kaiser roll' (also called a 'Vienna roll'), is a typically crusty round bread roll, originally from the Austrian Netherlands. Again, the Kaiser rolls have become popular throughout the Austrian Habsburg Empire. Today, they are also known in Poland (Galicia), the Czech lands, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, and even parts of Italy, Germany, the United States, and Canada (Newerkla 2012c). German *Teebutter* and the subsequent translations into Czech *čajové máslo*, Slovak *čajové maslo*, Hungarian *teavaj*, Slovene *čajno maslo*, and Croatian *čajni maslac* arose like many other German compounds with *Tee-* in the wake of the popularisation of English tea customs in East-Central Europe, especially the

tradition of serving tea with – at least – bread and butter. In agreement with the English preferring creamery butter to butter made out of sour cream, Austrian German *Teebutter* and its equivalents in the neighbouring languages originally denoted only best quality creamery butter. Later on, the notion became the official designation of best quality butter. As such, we can find the term in Austria's food code, the Codex alimentarius Austriacus, up to this day (Newerkla 2008).

Language use of this kind – both written and oral – not only reflects social patterns, but also the interrelatedness of discursive practices and cultural encounters. However, the role of transnational linguistic practices in people's everyday lives has so far been rather neglected, although the Habsburg monarchy was clearly a contact zone of migrants and travellers, a linguistic area where people drew on the practices of their various places of origin. From this linguistic area, a micro-area emerged in Vienna and Eastern Austria that was particularly affected by the influence of Czech on German (Newerkla 2007a). As early as the 19th century, the knowledge of Czech loanwords in Vienna was so strong that the well-known Austrian actor, singer and playwright Johann Nepomuk Nestroy could make use of them in his comedies and other dramatic pieces. We identified at least 50 words ranging from *ale* 'but' in his play *Martha oder Die Mischmonder Markt-Mägde-Mietung* (1848) to the pejorative denotation of Czechs as *Zopaks* (derived from *copak* 'what?') in his play *Eisenbahnheiraten oder Wien, Neustadt, Brünn* (1844). Other expressions used by Nestroy and then commonly known were *heidipritsch* 'totally gone' (< onomatopoetical *hajdy* and *pryč* 'gone'), *hubitschko* 'peck on the cheek' (< *hubička*), *Kaluppe* 'dilapidated, ramshackle hut' (< *chalupa* 'hut'), also in the German diminutive form *Kalupperl*; *Leschak* 'layabout' (< *ležák*), *nemam* 'have-not' (< *nemám*), *petschieren* 'seal' (< *zapečetit*), *powidalen* 'tell' (derived from the preterite form of *povídat*), *Rosimi (-sim-/-sum-)* 'wits' (< *rozum*), etc. (cf. Newerkla 2009, p. 9, 2013a, p. 254).

The influence of Czech and Slovak was also very strong in the semantic field related to cooking (kitchen words, denotations of food and meals). Words such as *Bramburi* 'potatoes' < *brambory*; *Buchtel* (B-/W-) 'yeast pastry' < *buchta*; *Liwanze* 'pancakes' < *lívanec*; *Klobasse* (-e/-i) 'hard smoked sausage' < *klobása*; *Kolatsche* (K-/G-) 'small yeast cake with filling' < *koláč* 'cake'; *Oblate* (stressed on the first syllable as in Czech) 'fine wafer' < *oplatka*; *Palatschinke* < *palačinka* (< Hungarian *palacsinta* < Romanian *plăcintă*) 'jam-filled pancake'; *Powidl* 'plum jam' < *povidla*; *Skubanki* (Sk-/St-) 'sweet noodles with poppy seeds' < *škubánky*; but also *Brimsen* 'sheep's milk cheese' < Slovak *bryndza* (< Romanian *brînză* apart from *brânză* 'cheese'); *Haluschka* 'chopped cabbage fried in butter and served over boiled noodles' < Slovak *haluška*, etc. are commonly known in Vienna even today (cf. Newerkla 2009, p. 9, 2013a, p. 254).

The language contact with Czech also had immediate influence on word formation in the colloquial variety of German in Vienna. This can be seen, e.g. in the use of the Czech word formation suffix *-ák* in words not known in Czech such as *Böhmak* 'Czech male', *Feschak* 'dashing young man', *Tränak* 'camp follower' (< French *train* and *-ák*), etc. But also the use of Czech stems with German word formation suffixes can be found, such as *Tschunkerl* 'mucky pup' < *čuně* 'piglet' and the Bavarian diminutive suffix *-erl*, or mixed suffix forms, such as *Armutschkerl* 'poor wretch' with two combined diminutive suffixes (< Czech *-č(e)k-* and Bavarian *-erl*). Even German verbs could be derived from Czech words, such as *verdobrischen* 'squander, blow' < *dobrý* 'good' (cf. Newerkla 2009, p. 9, 2013a, pp. 254–255).

To this day, we can encounter persons in all spheres of Vienna's public life, whose ancestors were born in the Czech lands and Upper Hungary, or who at least have Czech or Slovak family names. Simply consider the family background of the former Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, or the former Viennese mayor and subsequent president Franz Jonas, or the Czech names of other Austrian politicians such as Blecha < *blecha* 'flea'; Busek < *Bušek*, a diminutive of *Buš* derived from the name *Budimír, Budislav, Budivoj* or *Bohuslav*; Cap < *čáp* 'stork', Ceska < *čieška* 'small bowl' in Old Czech; Dohnal < *dohnal* 'he who caught up with'; Klestil < *klestil* 'he who pruned'; Klima < *Kliment* (Latin *Clemens*); Kukacka < *kukačka* 'cuckoo'; Lacina < *laciný* 'cheap', etc. Some Czech family names have become denotations of certain typical characters, e.g. *Březina*, *Novák* and *Trávníček* in expressions such as *Na servus Brežina!* in order to express unpleasant surprise; *Er ist immer der Nowak* in the sense of 'he is always the victim, he is always abused'. *Trawnitschek* is the embodiment of the typical petty bourgeois, known in Austria as the alter ego of the former actor Helmut Qualtinger (cf. Newerkla 2009, p. 8, 2013a, p. 253).

The code switching from Czech to German has over the centuries led to the characteristic use of prepositions in the Viennese colloquial variety of German. Take for example the equivalent prepositional phrases *auf Urlaub fahren < jet na dovolenou* 'go on holiday', vs. Standard German *in Urlaub fahren*; *auf zwei Tage nach Prag fahren < jet na dva dny do Prahy* 'travel to Prague for two days', vs. Standard German *für zwei Tage nach Prag fahren*; *auf jmdn./etw. denken < myslet na někoho/něco* 'think of someone', vs. Standard German *an jmdn./etw. denken*; *Vorbereitungen auf etw. < přípravy na něco* 'preparations for something', vs. Standard German *Vorbereitungen für/zu etw.*; *in der Nacht auf Sonntag < v noci na neděli* 'in the night to Sunday', vs. Standard German *in der Nacht zum Sonntag*; *sich auf jmdn./etw. erinnern < vzpomenout si na někoho/něco* 'remember someone', vs. Standard German *sich an jmdn./etw. erinnern*; *auf jmdn./etw.*

vergessen < zapomenout na někoho/něco 'forget someone', vs. Standard German *jmdn./etw. vergessen* (cf. Newerkla 2007a, p. 281, 2007b, p. 40).

Czech and the languages of other Slavic immigrants also fostered the use of hypocoristics and diminutives in Viennese German such as *Anči* for Anna or *Mamitschka* for mummy (< *mamička*) as well as the so-called double negation of the type *er hat kein Geld nicht g'habt* as in Czech *neměl žádné peníze* 'he did not have any money', *sie hat niemandem nichts gesagt* as in Czech *nikomu nic neřekla* 'she did not tell anyone', etc. (cf. Newerkla 2009, p. 10, 2013a, pp. 255–256).

Further results of this code switching from Czech to German in Vienna are phrases such as *Er/sie soll sich ausstopfen lassen! < Ať se jde vycpat!* in the sense of *Zum Kuckuck mit ihm/ihr!* 'Damn him/her!'; *Ohne Arbeit gibt's keine Kolatschen! < Bez práce nejsou koláče!* in the meaning of *Ohne Fleiß kein Preis!* 'no pains, no gains'; *die Kinder spielen sich < děti si hrají*, German *die Kinder spielen* 'the children play'; *Sonst bist g'sund? < Jinak si zdravý?* in the sense of *Bist du (noch) bei Trost?* 'Have you gone mad?'; *die Patschen strecken < natáhnout papuče/bačkory* for German *versterben* 'pass away'; *sich etw. aus dem Finger zuzeln < něco si vycucat z prstu* in the meaning of *etw. erahnen, erfinden* 'make something up'; *es steht (sich) (nicht) dafür < (ne)stojí to zato* in the meaning of *es lohnt sich (nicht)* 'it is (not) worth the effort'; *seine sieben Zwetschken packen < sbalit si svých pět švestek* (in Czech there are just five plums), in the sense of *sein Hab und Gut packen und gehen* 'to pack everything one owns and move to another place'; *das geht sich (nicht) aus < to (ne)vyjde* for German *das klappt (nicht)* 'turn out well/badly, work out all right'; *Das ist nicht mein Gusto! < To není mé gusto!* in the sense of *Das ist nicht mein Geschmack!* 'This is not my liking!', etc. These phrases have been integrated into Austrian German to such an extent, that we no longer perceive them as foreign, but as language elements typical of the Austrian variety of German. Other typically Viennese phrases are e.g. *auf Lepschi gehen* 'enjoy oneself' equivalent to Czech *jít na lepší*; *außer Obligo sein* 'be free of any obligation' < *být z obliga*; *bridsch sein* in the sense of 'be gone, be lost' < *pryč*; *na servus!* meaning 'fancy that' and expressing unpleasant surprise in equivalence to *no nazdar!* resp. *no servus!*; *pomāli, pomāli!* 'not so fast!' < Moravian Czech or Slovak *pomaly* 'slow', etc. (cf. Newerkla 2007a, p. 281, 2007b, p. 41, 2013a, p. 256).

However, the 20th century also brought about a distinct change in the importance of the various Slavic minority groups in Vienna. Whereas the influence of Czech and Slovak inhabitants deteriorated, the importance of other groups increased (e.g. the Poles, Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, Turks, etc.). Linguistic consequences of this development are on the one hand the vanishing of several Czech and Slovak loanwords from the colloquial vocabulary of Viennese speakers, such as *Babutschen* 'fabric slippers' < *papuče*; *fix Laudon* 'blasted!' in

equivalence to *fix Laudon*; *geh' zum Tschert* 'go to hell!' < *jdi k čertu*; *Howno* 'shit' < *hovno*; *Klitsch* 'key', primarily in the sense 'skeleton key' < *klíč*; *Kudlička* 'simple penknife' < *kudlička*; *Mamlas* 'coward, idiot' < *mamlas*; *motz* 'much' < *moc*; *Naschi-Vaschi* 'a (forbidden) card play' < *naši – vaši* 'yours – ours'; *Nusch (N-/K-)* 'knife' < *nůž*; *Penise* 'money' < *peníze*; *Piwo* 'beer' < *pivo*; *platti/zaplatti* 'pay' < *platiti, zaplatiti*; *potschkai troschku* 'wait for a moment' < Moravian Czech and Slovak *počkaj trošku*; *(keinen) Rosomi haben* in the sense of 'have (no) wit' < *rozum* 'common sense'; *schezko jedno* 'no matter (who, what, when, where, why, how)' < *všecko jedno*; *Schwerak* 'comedian, rogue' < *čtverák*; *spatni* 'bad' < *špatný*; *Tamleschi* 'clumsy person' < *tam leží* '(s)he is lying there'; *Tanzowat* in denoting a dance club for Czech maids and soldiers < *tancovat* 'dance'; *Topanken* 'thick-soled ankle boots' < Slovak *topánky* 'shoes'; *Wetsch* 'button, small ball' < *veteš* 'junk, rubbish' in merging with *věc* 'thing'; *Wojak* 'soldier' < *voják*, etc. (cf. Newerkla 2009, p. 11, 2013a, p. 257). On the other hand, language contact with Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian has become the most important Slavic factor in influencing the colloquial language of many Viennese speakers of German, especially young ones, during the past years. Apart from these Southern Slavic languages, there are only two other languages with at least equally significant influence, i.e. English and Turkish.

2.2 Polycentric Convergence – The Example of Austria

Our second project part within the framework of the SFB "German in Austria. Variation – Contact – Perception" (F 60-G 23)[6] is called "German in the context of the other languages in the Habsburg state (19th century) and 2nd Austrian republic". The main goal of this part of the project is to provide a historically founded and multilingualism-based understanding of Austrian German's polycentricity. In this context, it seems appropriate to speak of polycentricity rather than pluricentricity (Clyne 1989, Ammon 1995, Schmidlin 2011, Auer 2013), since we are dealing with different historical factors in interaction with the centres of the Habsburg state that determined the status, functionality and structural heterogeneity of Austrian German. Beginning with the assumption that specific dimensions of – from this point of view – polycentric Austrian German are historically motivated, a central aim is to reconstruct the functional and metalinguistic dimensions of German in the multilingual Habsburg state and to relate them to the situation in the Second Austrian Republic.

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6   See SFB "German in Austria. Variation – Contact – Perception": http://www.dioe.at (accessed 13/05/2019).

Investigating historical multilingualism in the Habsburg state can shed light on how, in the context of the other languages, German was used and valorised as an instrument of social interaction and as a reference point for cultural construction in East-Central Europe. Since communicative practices constitute a primary dimension of intercultural exchange, multilingualism represents a major signifier for non-national or multiple relations (e.g. Binder/Křivohlavá/Velek 2003, Evans 2004, Feichtinger/Cohen 2014, Goebl 1994, Judson 2006). Language as social practice provides access to ideologies and the ways people draw on, reproduce or create knowledge (cf. Heller 2001, pp. 214–215). This is true even more so for language ideologies and linguistic knowledge (e.g. Daskalov/Marinov 2013, Dorostkar 2014, Hentschel 1997). At the same time, historical multilingualism has had at least some impact on the linguistic structure of Austrian German (Newerkla 2013a, 2013b), but not much is known about aspects involving domain-specific communication or language-specific attitudes in the Habsburg state. So far, comparatively little language-centred historical research has been conducted on the interplay of officially imposed language regulations and unofficial multilingual practices in the domains of administration, the judiciary and education in the Habsburg monarchy, though such studies have been increasing since the 1990s (e.g. Burger 1995, Fellerer 2005, Newerkla 1999, Umberto/Rindler Schjerve/Metzeltin 1997). There were also ground-breaking research initiatives in this respect (Rindler Schjerve 2003) that explored how the struggle for power was reflected in attempts to control language use at different levels of discursive interaction and how, in the context of intricate and multiple language contact, language became a prominent site for interethnic controversies and conflicts.

Whereas the non-German-speaking nationalities of the Habsburg state attempted to redefine their status by demanding recognition of their languages and cultures, German-dominated state nationalism tried to re-establish its endangered hegemony by granting linguistic and cultural autonomy to the various ethnic groups. Hence, we hope that our investigations will yield new insights into the manner in which the different ethnic groups experienced the use of German – mediated through the multiple lingua-cultural practices – in their everyday lives. In addition, we will be able to understand how the diversity management from above and from below eventually shaped cultural encounters in East-Central Europe over time (Vetter 2003, Rindler Schjerve/Nelde 2003). In other words, we will try to identify the characteristics of the multilingual setting in which German was embedded at that time and which has most probably affected the language policies of the Second Austrian Republic as well as the

language behaviour of opinion leaders in the high-contact centres (most of all Vienna) – and thus German speakers in Austria – to the present day.

In this context, allow me to add a short aside in order to trigger even more thoughts on the question concerning the relationship between language, culture and society. If you belong to the deaf community in Austria, your perception of how languages are related in East-Central Europe usually differs decisively from our ordinary perception of language geography. Why is that? First, you most probably speak Austrian Sign Language (*Österreichische Gebärdensprache*, ÖGS), which is a fully-fledged natural language with complex structures and independent grammar as well as a sublexically significant sequential structure. "This means that, like spoken languages, sign languages have sub-lexical elements (phonology), morphology, semantics, syntax and pragmatics, and the lexicon consists of iconic and arbitrary signs." (cf. Krammer 2013, pp. 342–343). Second, for historical reasons Austrian Sign Language – together with Czech, Slovak and Hungarian Sign Languages – belongs to the language family of Austrian-Hungarian sign languages, which are part of the French Sign Language family. Also, the high degree of comprehensibility between the signed languages in Trieste (present-day Italy) and Austria is very probably due to their joint history of deaf schools within the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Dotter/Kellett Bidoli 2017). In contrast, although Austrian Sign language shares some aspects of its grammar with German and Swiss Sign Language, the vocabulary and thus the languages differ (Skant et al. 2002).

From the Austrian-Hungarian Sign Languages used in schools for the deaf in the Habsburg state, also the Slovenian and the Yugoslavian Sign Language (today Croatian Sign Language, Kosovar Sign Language, Serbian Sign Language) originated. And also the Russian Sign Language is said to have borrowed a lot of vocabulary from the Austrian-Hungarian sign languages due to the teachers in the first Russian schools for the deaf. In 1910, Russian Sign Language was also introduced in Bulgaria, where it has become a separate language (Bulgarian Sign Language) rather than a dialect of Russian Sign Language. However, whereas Wittmann (1991) classifies Bulgarian Sign Language as a descendent of Russian Sign, Bickford (2005) found that Bulgarian Sign formed a cluster with Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, Romanian, and Polish Sign. From this we can see that much research still has to be done from a historical point of view.

In Bulgaria, for example, the language of the classroom is different from that used by adults outside. Therefore it is not even clear, if Wittmann and Bickford looked at the same languages; nor, if one is derived from Russian Sign, if it is a dialect or if it creolised to form a new language. Not to speak of the above-mentioned Polish Sign Language that uses a one-handed manual alphabet based

on the alphabet from Old French Sign Language, whereas the language itself derives from German Sign Language (Farris 1994). Israeli Sign Language is also a descendant of German Sign Language, as it evolved from the sign language used by German Jewish teachers at a special school founded in 1873 by Marcus Reich. Several teachers from this school opened a school for deaf children in Jerusalem in 1932. Therefore, it still shows some resemblance to its German counterpart. But other sign languages or signing systems brought by immigrants also contributed to the emerging language, which started out as a pidgin. A local creole gradually emerged, which eventually became Israeli Sign Language. Today, this language is too removed from its origin to be considered a dialect of the German Sign Language.[7] Israeli Sign Language, however, is just the most commonly used sign language in the deaf community of Israel, where we can also find the Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language[8] or a Hebrew manually coded language, and others.

As far as East-Central Europe is concerned, the question arises from time to time whether there was something like a Yiddish Sign Language. But as far as we know, there are no published descriptions or detailed attestations of its existence, although there may have been local varieties in pre-Holocaust Eastern Europe, especially in schools for the deaf. In *Glottolog 3.2.* (Hammarström/Forkel/ Haspelmath 2017), the entry on Yiddish Sign Language (Glottocode: yidd1241, ISO 639-3: yds) has been retired (effective from 2015-01-12). The justification for this step was that Yiddish Sign Language was "non-existent". As Bernard Spolsky (2014) in his entry to the Jewish Language Research Website aptly remarks, experts in Sign Language have not heard of Yiddish Sign Language, neither Wendy Sandler, nor Nancy Brunlehrman, nor Bram Weiser nor Adele Kronick Shuart. But he continues, "There was a school in Cracow, the Yiddishe Toib Shtim Shule, where the pupils probably used a Sign Language amongst themselves (even though the school officially used spoken Yiddish). Mark Zaurov, a Deaf historian studying the experiences of the Jewish Deaf in the Holocaust, found mentions of several Deaf Jewish schools where many children spoke Yiddish; they may have had a local sign language." (cf. Spolsky 2014, para. 4) Looking back, it is obviously quite difficult to come up with relevant and accurate data in this respect. Nevertheless there "may have been distinctive sign languages used by Deaf communities in Eastern Europe before the war. But a distinct unified Yiddish Sign Language is unattested and unlikely." (cf. Spolsky 2014, para. 4)

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7   For the detailed story of Israeli Sign Language see Meir/Sandler (2008).
8   For more information on this language see Meir/Sandler/Padden/Aronoff (2010).

3 Conclusion

Our aim was to provide the reader with some interesting glimpses into the problems that make analysing linguistic areas in East-Central Europe, as the result of pluridimensional, polycentric convergence phenomena, a real challenge. Much research has to be done on that matter, much has already been achieved, but much is still ahead of us on the way to a better understanding of linguistic areas as such and especially in East-Central Europe. From the standpoint of contact linguistics and historical sociolinguistics, we should always bear in mind that languages do not converge by themselves, but that it is the agency or unconscious behaviour of speakers that has this effect (cf. Gijn/Muysken 2016, s. p.). In this context, we still must investigate further into the contribution of specific groups of people to the emergence of certain areas. In East-Central Europe, for example, large numbers of Jews identified with an ideal vision of German *Bildung* and enlightenment. "[…] the concept of *Bildung* became for many Jews »synonymous with their Jewishness.« It would be a fundamental instrument of cultural integration into German middle-class society in Austria. The German language and culture also provided a gateway to economic advancement and rising social status in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This was a crucial factor that influenced Jews as far apart as Bohemia, Hungary, Bukovina and the Adriatic port of Trieste." (cf. Wistrich 2007, p. 58) Thereby, they helped to establish German as the *lingua franca* of the polyglot monarchy, and, together with the state officials and the army, laid the foundations for the Habsburg empire to become a linguistic area in East-Central Europe with certain characteristics. In this context, the role of Yiddish as a means to bridge the gap between Austrian German and the various languages of the monarchy, the Slavic languages in particular, has not yet drawn proper scientific attention. Uncovering systematically the hidden multilingualism of that time is still an important desideratum of research in the field, although we are often confronted with the lack of sufficiently meaningful data.

Furthermore, as we have shown in the second part of our paper, in this context it seems more appropriate to speak of polycentric rather than pluricentric convergence. Following Clyne (1989), polycentricity is not entirely the same as pluricentricity, because "the latter term emphasizes plurality of varieties within a language, i.e. plurality of relatively stable self-contained linguistic systems that together make up a language. Polycentricity emphasizes the functional inequality between such varieties and the simultaneous links to the various centering powers language practices are simultaneously subject to. Whereas a pluricentric language is the sum of its varieties, a polycentric language is a dynamic, socially

ordered system of resources and norms that are strongly or weakly associated with one or more centers." (cf. Li/Juffermans 2012, 77). For instance, as we could see from the example of the Austrian-Hungarian sign languages, their different evolution and history, these kinds of signed languages are not so tied to the spoken languages of a region, but rather to a place or a social stratum. This fact makes the concept of linguistic areas appear even more vivid and dependent on social interaction, e.g. at schools or in other language domains, rather than on the specific characteristics of the languages in contact. Again, as said above, languages do not converge by themselves, it is the behaviour of the speakers that brings about these pluridimensional, polycentric convergence phenomena leading to specific linguistic areas. While this phenomena is not exclusive to East-Central Europe, it is certainly applicable to it.

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